

**Virginia Board of Education
Committee on the Lowest Performing School Systems
Monroe Building Rooms C and D
February 24, 2004 3:30 p.m.**

- I. Mr. Mark E. Emblidge, chairman of the committee, welcomed the committee members, and provided an overview of the meeting's purpose.
- II. Review of legislation before the General Assembly relating to low performing school divisions

Ms. Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications, updated the committee on the Board of Education's bill HB 1294 (Reid), initiated by the committee. This bill permits the Board of Education, once it has obtained evidence through the school academic review process that the failure of schools within a division to achieve full accreditation status is related to division level failure to implement the Standards of Quality, to require a division level academic review. The bill also provides that when the Board of Education determines that a school division has failed or refused, and continues to fail or refuse, to comply with the Standards of Quality and the development or implementation in a timely manner of the corrective action plan, the board may petition the circuit court having jurisdiction in the school division to mandate compliance with the relevant standard and the development or implementation of the required corrective action plan.

Deleted: The Board of Education supports HB 1294.

Ms. Wescott also reviewed bills of interest to the board in the areas of the Standards of Quality, accountability and governance, and graduation requirements.

Dr. Cynthia Cave, Director of Policy, updated the committee on the status of HB 380, a charter school bill to amend the Charter School Excellence and Accountability Act. The bill contains provisions that address the following:

- Optional review of the public charter school application by the Board of Education
- Priority to be provided particularly for schools serving at-risk students currently enrolled in schools that have not achieved full accreditation
- Removal of prescribed ratio of public charter schools for at-risk students to at least one-half of charters
- Removal of limitations by local school board to the number of public charter schools established within a division and statutory cap on the maximum number of charter schools
- Ownership or financial interest in renovating, lending, granting, or leasing public charter school facilities allowed with disclosure
- Maintenance of high standards for teachers and administrators

- Authorization for charter schools to contract with private institutions of higher education
- Evidence that residents of the school division support the charter school
- Additional information in local school board annual reports on charter school applications, including reasons for denials and whether a public charter school is designed to help students currently served by schools that have not achieved full accreditation
- Board of Education annual report to the General Assembly
- Maximum terms of public charter schools increased from three to five school years
- Sunset clause requiring the bill's new provisions to expire on July 1, 2009

III. Planning for division academic reviews

Dr. Cheryl Magill, Director of Accreditation, provided the committee with an update on information on the division level academic review process. The division level academic review process is designed to help school divisions identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. The focus of the review process is the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels. The reviews will mirror school level reviews. The reviews will gather information about and indicators of curriculum alignment, allocation of instructional time, use of data, professional development, improvement planning, instructional method, student achievement, support to schools, and distribution of resources. Part of the review process will include public informational meetings.

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IV. Next steps

The board president requested that the division level academic review document be revised to emphasize alignment with the state statutes containing the Standards of Quality. The president encouraged comment from other members of the committee and full board and the March Board of Education meeting.